

operamission presents
53rd Street Handel

Wednesday, October 19, 2016

An original pastiche:

'The Politics of Love and Rivalry in Handel's London Operas'

The Cast, in order of appearance:

tenor CHRISTOPHER SOKOLOWSKI as "Berengario" (Prince of Spoleto)
countertenor ARYEH NUSSBAUM COHEN as "Tirinto" (a hero of Athens)
soprano JENNIFER ROBERTS JENKINS as "Asteria" (Princess of Media)
bass PAUL GOODWIN-GROEN as "Altomaro" (grandfather of Orlando)
countertenor JORDAN RUTTER as "Orlando" (Count of France)
mezzo-soprano BROOKE LARIMER as "Irene" (Princess of Trabzon)

assisted by the operamission HANDEL Band:

Brendan Ratchford, baroque violin; David Bakamjian, baroque 'cello; Jennifer Peterson, harpsichord

ARGUMENT

The King of Media, Haliata, has just died of a sudden illness.

His daughter is his only legitimate heir,

while noblemen are converging on her to claim the throne for themselves.

To ensure her safety, Princess Asteria indulges the love of all of them.

When the presumptuous Berengario, lovesick Tirinto, and violent Orlando all discover her plans,

Asteria must find a new ally to protect her rule and save herself.

Scene 1

*Berengario, arranged to be married to Asteria by her father,
presumes to take the throne for himself with King Haliate's death.*

*Grave è'l fasto di regnar,
la speranza alza l'orgoglio,
il timor mostra lo scoglio,
ambo il cor sanno agitar.*

Weighty is the pomp of ruling,
hope lifts pride,
fear demonstrates obstacles,
both knowing how to agitate one's heart.

(from *Lotario*, HWV 26, Act I)

tenor **Christopher Sokolowski**

Scene 2

The Greek hero Tirinto is in love with Asteria.

Of the three rivals he has the weakest claim to the throne.

Having discovered a love letter Orlando has sent to Asteria, he confronts her.

*Se bramate d'amar, chi vi sdegna,
vuò sdegnarvi, ma come, non sò.*

If you desire to love one who scorns you,
I want to scorn you, yet how, I do not know.

*La vostra ira crudel me l'insegna
tento farlo, e quest'alma non può.*

Your cruel ire is instructing me
to attempt to do it, and this soul cannot.

(from *Serse*, HWV 40, Act II)

countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**

Scene 3

Politically entangled due to her promise to her deceased father to wed Berengario, Asteria assures Berengario of her loyalty, despite her true love for Tirinto.

*Quando accenderan quel petto
i trasporti del valor
a me pensa, o caro, allor,
e a quel cor che tuo non è.*

*Le promesse dell'affetto,
idol mio, deh! non scordar,
alma avvezza a bene amare
è costante nella fè.*

When the transports of valor
inflame your breast,
then think of me, oh darling,
and of this heart that is not yours.

The promises of the affections,
my idol, please do not forget,
a soul accustomed to passionate love
is constant in its faith.

(from *Deidamia*, HWV 42, Act I)

soprano **Jennifer Roberts Jenkins**

Scene 4

*Altomaro informs his grandson Orlando of his right to the throne,
explaining to him that he is the illegitimate son of King Haliate.*

Orlando prefers to maintain his scruples, while Altomaro encourages sowing discord.

*Fra l'ombra e gl'orrori
farfalla confusa
già spenta la face
non sà mai goder.*

Amongst the shadows and the horrors
the confused butterfly
already having extinguished its torch
has never known happiness.

*Così fra timori
tua mente delusa
non speri mai pace
nè speri piacer.*

Likewise amongst fears
your deluded mind
never hopes for peace
nor expects pleasure.

(from *Sosarme*, HWV 30, Act I)

bass **Paul Goodwin-Groen**

Scene 5

Orlando asks his grandfather to quickly deliver a letter he has written to his lover Irene, explaining his disappearance due to political entrapment.

Altomaro reluctantly exits to fulfill this request.

*Non sò se sia la speme,
che mi sostiene in vita
o l'aspro mia dolor.*

I don't know if it's hope
that sustains me in life
or the bitterness of my sorrow.

*Sò che quest'alma geme
da che mi fù rapita
la gioja del mio cor.*

I know that this soul sighs
because I was robbed
of the joy of my heart.

(from *Serse*, HWV 40, Act I)

countertenor **Jordan Rutter**

Scene 6

*Asteria turns Berengario and Tirinto against Orlando
by humiliating Orlando in front of the court.
Orlando responds by calling on his soldiers.*

ORLANDO: *Voglio stragi,
vogl'io sangue,
morte a te,
piaghe a te,
per punire armo il rigor.*

BERENGARIO: *Eccoti il petto,
non mi spaventa,*

ASTERIA: *Eccoti il cor,
sarà contenta,*

A and B: *per morire avrem valor.*

ORLANDO: I want carnage,
I want blood,
death for you,
wounds for you,
I am armed with the severity to punish.

BERENGARIO: Here is my chest,
you do not frighten me,

ASTERIA: Here is my heart,
I will be content,

A & B: we possess the valor needed in order to die.

(from *Tamerlano*, HWV 18, Act II)

soprano **Jennifer Roberts Jenkins**

countertenor **Jordan Rutter**

tenor **Christopher Sokolowski**

Scene 7

*Having witnessed all the preceding action,
Irene reveals herself and chides Orlando for his aggressive behavior.
She confronts him for loving Asteria in his aspiration for the throne,
and demands he pledge his faith.*

*Un altra volta ancor
mi promettesti amor,
poi m'ingannasti.*

Once upon a time
you promised me love,
then you deceived me.

*D'aver tradita un dì
Irene tua così,
crudel, ti basti.*

For Irene to have been betrayed once like this,
cruel one, I've had enough of you.

(from *Partenope*, HWV 27, Act I)

mezzo-soprano **Brooke Larimer**

Scene 8

Berengario hesitates and begins to question and doubt his ability to rule the kingdom. As he contemplates the consequences of failure, he reassures himself that he will die a king. Orlando enters, demanding Berengario's surrender.

*Regno e grandezza,
vassalli e trono
superbo involami
fato crudel.*

*Mà quel valore
ch'ho nel mio core
non teme oltraggio
di stelle rigide,
d'irato Ciel.*

Reign and grandeur,
vassals and throne
are arrogantly stolen from me
by cruel fate.

But this valor
which I have in my heart
does not fear outrage
of the rigid stars,
of irate Heaven.

(from *Lotario*, HWV 26, Act II)

tenor **Christopher Sokolowski**

Scene 9

*Orlando has taken Berengario prisoner, Asteria desperately following them.
When Tirinto sees this, he believes it to be proof of Asteria's love for Berengario.*

Sinfonia

(from *Lotario*, HWV 26, Act III)

Scene 10

Alone, Tirinto reflects on his love for Asteria and his helplessness.

*Pieno il core
di timore
palpitar io sento in seno,
qual chi teme del baleno
quando il Ciel tonando v`a.*

*Il destino
è già vicino
del gran fulmine temuto,
la saetta del rifiuto
chi di noi colpir dovr`a?*

My heart full
of fear
I feel it palpitate in my breast,
just as one who fears the lightning
when Heaven begins to thunder.

The destiny of the great fearful lightning
is already near,
who among us will be struck
by the bolt of rejection?

(from *Imeneo*, HWV 41, Act III)

countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**

Scene 11

Orlando is driven to fury by both Irene's confrontation and Asteria's betrayal.

*Cielo! se tu il consenti,
deh! fà che nel mio seno
possa anche il ferro entrar.*

Heaven! if you consent,
please make it possible for the sword
to also enter my breast.

*Perchè a un sì rio dolore
dal misero mio core
sappia col ferro almeno
l'uscita ritrovar.*

Because from such a river of sorrow
the misery of my heart
will, with the sword, at least finally know
how to find its way out.

(from *Orlando*, HWV 31, Act II)

countertenor **Jordan Rutter**

Scene 12, *scena ultima*

At last Orlando surrenders to Irene, giving Asteria and the throne to Tirinto.

*Coronata di gigli e di rose
con gli amori ritorni la pace.*

Crowned with lilies and with roses
peace returns with the cherubs.

*E frà mille facette amorose
perda i lampi dell'odio la face.*

And among a thousand little loving torches
hatred's lamps lose their facades.

(from *Tamerlano*, HWV 18, Act III)

countertenor **Aryeh Nussbaum Cohen**

countertenor **Jordan Rutter**

As all is resolved, Altomaro returns to the court to apologize for his unscrupulous actions.

Coro

*D'atra notte già mirasi a scorno
d'un bel giorno
brillar lo splendor.*

Scorning dark night,
already we see shining
the splendor of a beautiful day.

*Frà le tede, che Lachesi accende,
chiara splende
la face d'Amor.*

Amongst the torches lit by Destiny
clearly shines
the torch of Love.

(from *Tamerlano*, HWV 18, Act III)

Thank you for attending
53rd Street Handel

This evening's program was curated by Jennifer Peterson and Jordan Rutter.

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